

Glockenspiel Featured at Swiss Days

As part of the town's Swiss theme, residents have built and installed in their Bavarian-style Town Hall, a glockenspiel, weighing 500 pounds, featuring five dancing figures and valued at \$35,000.

Literally translated glockenspiel means "bell music," but Midway Mayor Gene Probst explained "glock" also means "clock" and "spiel" designates "all the rest of it."

The "rest of it" traditionally includes music and figures that dance or twirl when the clock strikes certain times. The Midway glockenspiel incorporates all the tradition of the glockenspiels found around Switzerland.

Five 36-inch figures rotate on small platforms. They circle around on a 40-inch diameter turntable. The mechanism is electronically synchronized with a 48-inch clock above it with a computer program. It is operated by a 40-channel remote control garage door opener.

When the clock strikes the hour, a pair of doors, four feet wide by 52 inches tall, open. The platform exits and turns while the figures twirl to Swiss music. After three minutes, it retreats and the doors shut until the next hour.

Soft floodlights will light the glockenspiel at night. When the clock strikes the hour, the lights will go to full power, then dim when the performance is over.

Dollmaker Erla Young, who teaches art at Brigham Young University, designed the dolls by combining bits and pieces of lathed wood. A woodworker, Larry O'Driscoll, made most of them as samples of balusters, the ornate rails that hold up banisters. He had discarded them and Mrs. Young rummaged through the pile, rescuing arms, legs, torsos, and heads for her little "people."

Under her direction, Jack Angus put them together without screws, using only glue and dowels to create the figures.

Mrs. Young painted and clothed them with Swiss costumes, which are partly authentic and partly stylized. "We decided to go for the Pinocchio kind of approach — kind of whimsical — in keeping with the character of the materials," explained Fran Anderson, project chairman.

He said he took the idea to Vard A. Roper, who heads the mechanical and welding department at Utah Valley Community College. Mr. Roper's first question was, "What is a glockenspiel?"

Mr. Anderson described what the machine needed to do and Mr. Roper and 16 students put it together, machining the parts that couldn't be purchased. They used a block and tackle connected to a car to lift the 500-pound machine into place.

In appreciation for their labor, Midway established a scholarship for a Midway student to attend the college for a year.

The electrical wiring was installed by Les Corbett.

The idea of building the glockenspiel emerged at a board meeting of the Midway Boosters, a group of volunteers organized to build up the town and particularly develop the Swiss theme of the town. They fund their projects with money from the annual Swiss Days festivities and private donations.

Mr. Anderson said they had paid about \$5,500 for the glockenspiel's parts and materials. It has been valued at over \$35,000, about what it would have cost if all the volunteer labor were figured in.

